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IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously submitted) Sugar-free hard-coated comestibles consisting of a hard coating and an edible, chewable and/or pharmaceutical core that is elected from the group consisting of pharmaceutical tablets, chewing gum, confectionery product, chocolate and nut, and said hard coating is obtainable by using a coating syrup comprising at least 95% maltitol and characterised in that

- a) dry matter content of syrup is from 68-72%, and
- b) dry matter content of syrup is comprising from 0.7-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>4+</sub>.

2. (Previously submitted) Sugar-free hard-coated comestibles according to claim 1, characterised in that said maltitol syrup consists of:

- a) from 95-97% by weight of maltitol,
- b) a maximum of 1.5% by weight of DP<sub>1</sub>,
- c) from 0-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>3</sub>,
- d) from 0.7-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>4+</sub>.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) Process for preparing sugar-free hard-coated comestibles and said process comprising the following steps:

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a) applying a coating syrup, containing a maltitol syrup, onto the cores of the comestibles in a moving bed of a coating apparatus,  
b) applying maltitol in powder form for obtaining coated cores,  
c) drying the coated cores by using drying air in the temperature range of from 15 to 45°C and a moisture content of at most 50% relative humidity, and said process is characterised in that maltitol syrups of step a) has a dry matter content from 68-72% and said maltitol syrup ~~de~~ comprises 0.7-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>4+</sub>.

6. (Previously presented) Process according to claim 5 characterised in that in step a) dry matter of maltitol syrup is consisting of:

- a) from 95-97% by weight of maltitol,
- b) a maximum of 1.5% by weight of DP<sub>1</sub>,
- c) from 0-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>3</sub>,
- d) from 0.7-1.5% by weight of DP<sub>4+</sub>.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously presented) Sugar-free comestibles according to claim 1, characterized in that the dry matter content of said syrup is from 70-72%.

10. (Previously presented) Sugar-free comestibles according to claim 1, characterized in that said comestibles have a smooth, regular surface.

11. (Previously presented) Sugar-free comestibles according to any one of claims 1, 2, 9 or 10, characterised in that the core is

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chewing gum and the hard coating is non-sticky and the surface of the hard coating is regularly formed and remains intact during processing.

12. (New) Sugar-free comestibles according to claim 9, wherein said hard coating has a homogeneous surface.

13. (New) Sugar-free comestibles according to claim 1, wherein said hard coating consists of 1 to 100 layers.

14. (New) Sugar-free comestibles according to claim 1, wherein said maltitol syrup contains 0 to 1.5% by weight DP<sub>3</sub>.

15. (New) The process according to claim 5, wherein said cores comprise chocolate.

16. (New) The process according to claim 5, wherein said cores comprise nuts.